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9 MAY 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

SUBJECT : Some Problems in Personnel Administration

1. The following paragraphs outline a few observations and suggestions, presented in barebones form as a basis for discussion. They can be expanded as necessary.

2. For sometime trends have been developing in our manpower situation which spell trouble ahead. Though separable for purposes of study and action, they are inter-related and should be viewed accordingly. Points of particular concern include:

a. Shortsightedness and conservatism in initiating clearance actions, with resultant peaks and valleys in the manpower input cycle.

b. Escalation of qualification requirements as ceiling constraints get tighter. In other words, with fewer jobs to fill offices are harder to please.

c. Rising attrition among young professionals, including CT's, during the early years of duty.

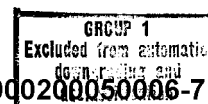
d. Increase in the number of resignations for job-related reasons, notably underemployment and dearth of prospects for advancement. (The cliché is "overqualified, overstaffed, overlooked".)

e. Salary and grade offers which are becoming non-competitive for the level of qualifications we seek, and employment procedures which are unnecessarily time-consuming and wasteful for both the Agency and the applicant.

f. Growing confusion about the purpose and uses of the CT Program.

3. This rather sweeping list is presented in no particular sequence or order of priority. In discussing it, however, some sequence should be observed. Let's start with requirements. It is a truism that employers want the best

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people they can get for the price, and in our case this has been reinforced by a general insistence upon "quality" in selection. No office with "Analyst" positions will admit that it can do with less than superior qualifications, including a college degree and better-than-average test scores. The result is overqualification for routine jobs and early dissatisfaction. The qualification requirements are not equally high for OCI, RID, OER, CRS, [] of Reports and Analyst jobs in the DDP, yet we act as though they were.

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4. Let's look now at the application form. Attached at Tab A is a proposed Professional Qualifications Statement", prepared by [] and supported by a memorandum of explanation and justification which I find persuasive. Something along this line has been urged repeatedly by a number of Agency managers, notably [] and I join them.

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5. Next we come to the review of the application by the interested component(s) and the initial decision as to whether there is enough interest to put the case "in process." Under present arrangements the application is reviewed by one or more components, according to the functional relevance of the qualifications presented and whether anyone is "buying". Or the file may sit in the Skills Bank without review until it is rejected for lack of takers. Component representatives necessarily have a constant eye to their ceiling situation and the likelihood of vacancies down the road, and when times are tight one or both of two things happen; they pass up cases for fear of being overencumbered later on, or they postpone decision in hopes that a better candidate will come along. The unfortunate result is an abnormally low rate of initiations during the first half of the fiscal year, then a dawning realization of probable shortfall, and a spurt in initiations during the closing months when it is too late to get completed actions by 30 June. The carry-over then collides with ceiling restraints during the first quarter of the new fiscal year and the cycle starts over again. In FY 1969, for example, professional initiations (non-CT) totalled 298 during July-December 1968, ranging from 35 to 65 and averaging 49.6 per month. From January through April 1969 the total was 546, ranging from 96 to 198, averaging 136.5 per month. It is easy to see where we will come out with such an uneven distribution of input over the year.

6. I suggest that we must try to break down the notion that a decision to "put in process" is a commitment to hire.

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It is an indication of serious interest and a finding that the qualifications presented meet a functional - not necessarily an organizational - requirement of the Agency. The final selection decision is still sometime away and will be made by the component on the basis of interviews, mutuality of interest, investigation, etc., and according to the vacancy situation. Furthermore, most good applicants could fill a requirement in more than one area of the Agency and an overly specific determination at the outset may be a disservice to the applicant and to the organization; as things stand, a rejection by the initiating component for any reason whatsoever tends to preclude serious consideration of the applicant by any other component.

7. The Placement Division/OP, more than any other component, has information on total staffing requirements and experience data to show what the total number of cases in process should be at any given time in order to get a given result. I suggest, therefore, that Placement Division, in coordination with operating components and through mechanisms to be established, should make or procure the initial determination of functional relevance and initiate clearance requests. Then, as more evidence becomes available, using components can make their selection decisions much closer to the date of availability of the candidate. I believe such coordinated action offers the best hope of levelling input over the year and of maintaining a pipeline which bears some relationship to EOD requirements. It would represent no infringement of the local managerial prerogative - on the contrary, it would be a significant expansion of OP's service role - and by evening the workload it would benefit the processing offices.

8. Attention has been given in other connections to problems of poor morale and job dissatisfaction among young professional employees, why they resign, etc., and I shall add nothing here. The next, round of questionnaires to be administered by the Inspector General's committee will add further evidence. As for our lagging salary scale for high quality applicants, that is a developing rather than a full fledged problem. A good deal of data can be found as needed. Of greater significance right now is the gap between expectation and reality in the early job experience of junior professional employees. There are pockets of underemployment and poor morale scattered around the Agency, and we do not know enough about them, where they are and why, until resignations or complaints surface them. And then there isn't

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very much that we in OP can do about it. Here is a significant area in which we must start with the follow-up capabilities of the Placement Division. I want to get on with some of the actions we discussed []

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9. Finally we come to the CT Program and its role in the scheme of things. It would be instructive to review the evolution of the Program and the steps by which it got to where it is today, and that can be done if you wish, but the immediate concern is that the Program is in trouble. Its purposes are unclear and its stature in the Agency is slipping. This is not the fault of the Program, however; it is the Agency which has changed, and the nature of the demands made upon the Program. For example:

a. The CTP is designed for the high potential generalist whom it evaluates during a training cycle in which he is exposed to and performs in a variety of Agency activities before it is determined where he would be best placed. Specialized personnel requirements now force a pre-determination of the individual's area of assignment, thus obviating the purpose of much of the training package.

b. The CTP traditionally has sought to observe a high standard of education, intelligence, personality, motivation, versatility, etc., in its selections and considers this a major responsibility. The Agency expects this, but has added the additional requirement of specific credentials to fill specific jobs.

c. One of the Program's most valuable features was the post-training trial attachment before the CT was permanently assigned. An element of the attachment was the responsibility of the supervisor to prepare a written plan for on-the-job development of the trainee. It didn't always work out as planned but it stimulated constructive thinking and it was an important element in the job adjustment and satisfaction of the individual. Now CTP loses administrative control upon completion of formal training, and it is precisely the lack of on-the-job development and planning for junior careerists which underlies much employee dissatisfaction.

d. With tightening of our internal circumstances there has been a move to decelerate the promotion rate

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for CT's. Though unresolved, the pressure for such a move still exists. At the same time the requirements for CT's established by operating components call for higher levels of qualification than heretofore. These are incompatible counter forces which CTP is expected to resolve.

10. To summarize, CTP is expected to bring in each year a fixed number of motivated, educated, intelligent people who possess both special skills and broad potential; earmark them in advance for a functional area and then acquaint them through training with all areas; convey to them inevitably in the training process that they are considered to be a cut above the average and that the Agency not only wants them but is willing to go to some extra trouble on their behalf; and then turn them over to components where they encounter the "real world" job situation for the first time. For the most part they are well received, and are assigned to supervisors who do for them what their administrative circumstances will permit. However, they soon learn that the Directorates treat their people differently; that the rate of advancement differs; that the status of CT is not regarded in the same light in all areas; that the CT becomes indistinguishable among his fellows in a short time; and that the responsibility for decisions affecting their careers is so diffused that it becomes very difficult to find someone who can explain or do something about a particular decision. We are fortunate that the attrition rate thus far has been low. I suspect that the present generation of job-seekers may be a bit more difficult.

11. The Program has served the Agency well, but it is time to make some changes. Its principles and objectives are still valid and its role with respect to a leadership echelon is essentially unchanged. I think the basic question is one of timing. In its present form it has become just another manning system, to bring in a portion of each year's input under different procedures and with the benefit of some extra formal training. The CT label is still meaningful but its substance is diminishing. Before the values of the Program are further affected, I suggest the following reorientation.

12. In the first place, in speaking of the CTP we really should be thinking of a function, a process, a development system - call it what you will - rather than a self-contained organizational entity. Thus it doesn't

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belong exclusively in OTR or OP or anywhere else, but its principles and objectives should be features of the Agency's personnel management system. I believe we could come to this functional view, and resolve some of the present difficulties, along the following lines:

a. Discontinue the external recruitment of young professionals to enter the Agency as CT's. Instead, recruit against the total professional manpower requirements of the components as established in the Advanced Staffing Plan.

b. Let OP, through Placement Division participation in initiation decisions, monitor the application of general qualitative as well as specialized standards in selection.

c. Give all young professional appointees an initial orientation, perhaps four weeks or so which would provide a uniform understanding of the Agency as a whole.

d. After a year's work experience, in the course of which the employee and the Agency will have taken each other's measure, let the Directorates select their Career Trainees. At this point the training can have vastly more meaning and relevance, and would serve a proper developmental objective rather than as what is now a selection screen as much as anything else.

e. For maximum effectiveness, I believe the trainees selected should be placed in a central development complement and supervised by a small Program Staff, though I recognize that this is a debatable point. The advantages would be uniformity of treatment and some degree of administrative freedom in the redeployment of individuals whose career interests might have changed. Furthermore, I think this staff should evaluate the effectiveness of individual performance and recommend action, including separation or reassignment. Not all would be selected as CT's, just as a quarter or less of present appointees are CT's, and we would get some fall-out among those not selected. Furthermore, we should expect some attrition during training if it were made demanding.

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f. The Program staff should be most carefully selected, broadly representative of the Directorates, and it would be entirely appropriate for it to be housed in the Office of Personnel.



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Deputy Director of Personnel
for
Recruitment and Placement

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